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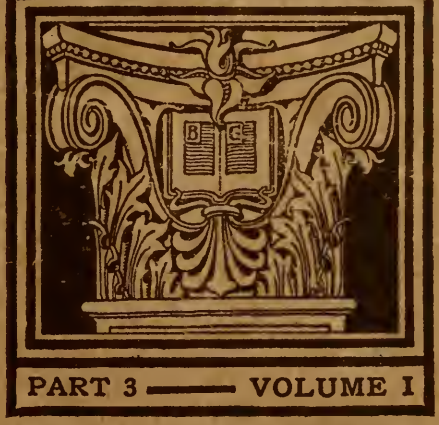
Masters in Art

A Series of Illustrated Monographs

Issued Monthly

VELASQUEZ



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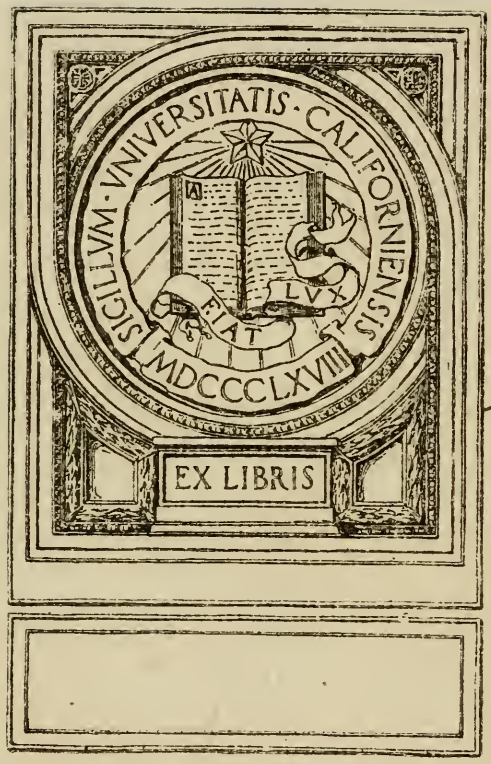
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MASTERS IN ART. PLATE I

VELASQUEZ
DON FERDINAND OF AUSTRIA
PRADO, MADRID

CALIFORNIA

MASTERS IN ART. PLATE II

VELASQUEZ
THE TOPERS
PRADO, MADRID

MASTERS IN ART. PLATE III

VELASQUEZ
JUANA DE MIRANDA
BERLIN GALLERY

VELASQUEZ
DON BALTASAR CARLOS ON HORSEBACK
PRADO, MADRID

Univ. of California

VELASQUEZ
POPE INNOCENT X.
DORIA GALLERY, ROME

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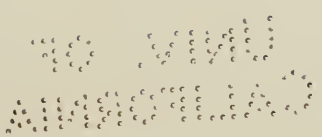
CALIFORNIA

VELASQUEZ
THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS
PRADO, MADRID



VELASQUEZ
THE MAIDS OF HONOR
PRADO, MADRID

DO NOT
CIRCULATE

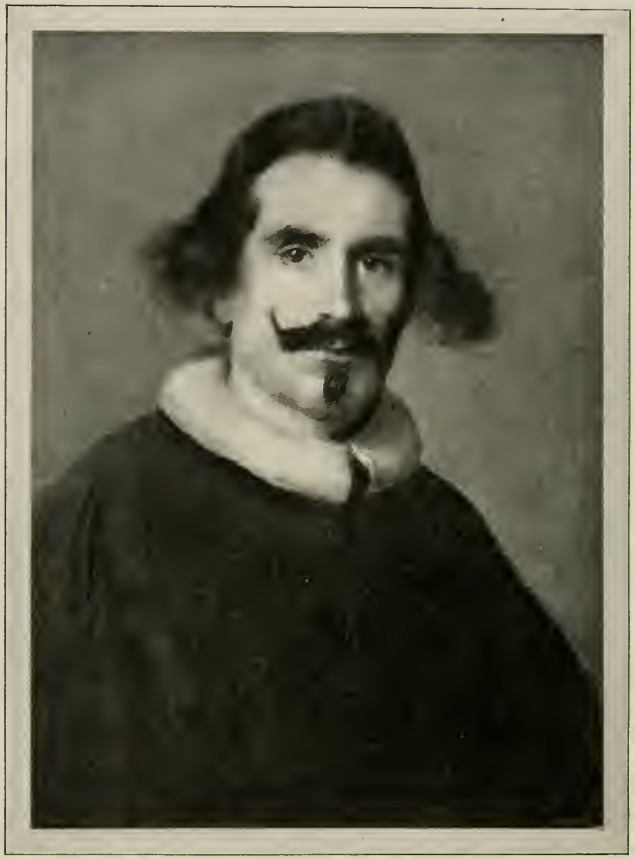
MASTERS IN ART. PLATE VIII

VELA[illegible]
SURRENDER OF BREDA
PRADO [illegible]RID

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

VELASQUEZ
PHILIP IV.
NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

VELASQUEZ
THE INFANTA MARIA THERESA
PRADO, MADRID



PORTRAIT OF VELASQUEZ BY HIMSELF

The likeness here reproduced is supposed to be the original sketch for a portrait which Pacheco credits Velasquez as having painted while in Rome in 1630. The artist is dressed in black, his complexion is pale, his hair dark and thick. The face, decidedly Spanish in its type, is expressive and sympathetic. It represents him at about the age of thirty-one. The portrait hangs in the Capitoline Gallery, Rome.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Diego Rodriguez de Silva Velasquez

BORN 1599: DIED 1660
SPANISH SCHOOL

"EDINBURGH REVIEW" VOL. 171

DIEGO RODRIGUEZ DE SILVA VELASQUEZ (pronounced Vay-lahs-keth) was born at Seville on or about June 6, 1599—in the same year as Van Dyck, and six years before his royal master and patron, Philip IV. of Spain. His father, Juan Rodriguez de Silva, was of ancient Portuguese lineage, and his mother, Doña Geronima Velasquez, belonged to a good stock of Seville, both families ranking as Sevillan *hidalgos* or members of the inferior nobility. According to an Andalusian custom, the name by which he is commonly known is that of his mother.

Velasquez's first teacher in art was the terrible Francisco de Herrera, an erratic but unquestionably gifted precursor of Spanish realism, from whose ungenial studio he soon proceeded to that of Francisco Pacheco. Here he studied for fully five years, and, at the end of that time, in 1618, married Pacheco's daughter, Juana de Miranda, of which event the elder master gives the following naïve description: "After five years of education and training, I married him to my daughter, induced by his youth, integrity, and good qualities, and the prospects of his great natural genius." . . .

It is quite possible that having shown thus early—for he was at the date of his marriage only in his nineteenth year—a calm, equable temperament hardly consistent with vast and ambitious designs, he might have been well content to settle down to the uneventful career and the moderate gains of a provincial artist. On March 31, 1621, there occurred, however, quite unexpectedly, an event which agreeably excited and perturbed all who had formed projects of advancement or change. This was the sudden death of Philip III., and the consequent accession to the throne of Philip IV., then a boy in his fifteenth year, of whose abilities a high estimate had already been formed, and who had for this reason been jealously excluded from all participation in State affairs. . . .

When Velasquez undertook his first journey to Madrid in search of more rapid advancement, his father-in-law, Pacheco, gave him introductions to important Sevillans attached to the court, but these efforts led to no result, for no introduction to the young king was on this occasion brought about. In the spring of 1623, however, came a letter from his friend Don Juan de Fonseca y Figueroa, inviting him, at the request of the all-powerful Minister Olivares, to return to Madrid, and granting a sum of fifty ducats for travelling expenses.

Velasquez made his *début*, or rather his *rentrée*, with a portrait of Fonseca, which, being carried to the palace, met with such recognition that it was forthwith declared that he should paint Don Ferdinand, the king's brother, and then on further consideration, that he should commence with the king himself; and to the magic of Velasquez's

brush it is due that Philip's memory has not become as dim, as faint in outline, as that of any other weakling monarch of the long Spanish decadence, which dates from the last years of Philip II. With this same painter the king was to continue, with two important intervals, in daily and intimate intercourse during forty years; and besides the unbounded admiration of the true connoisseur that he undoubtedly was, Philip accorded to the artist as much friendship and regard as it was possible for *el Rey*, isolated and walled in by the inflexible court etiquette of the time, to vouchsafe to a subject.

Thus was Velasquez, at the exceptionally early age of twenty-three years, formally installed as one of the specially privileged painters of Philip IV., with a studio in the palace, a residence in the city, and a monthly stipend of twenty ducats, to which was added, moreover, special payment, as Pacheco states, for each work produced. . . .

An important event in the artistic career of the master was the nine months' visit of Rubens to Spain (1628–29) on the occasion of his famous, quasi-diplomatic mission to the Spanish court. Although Velasquez had a high admiration for Rubens, and, moreover, had unlimited opportunities of studying his technique, it is a misapprehension to date the growth of his second manner, with its increase in lightness, unity, and force of tone, and its added preoccupation with atmospheric effect, to a study or imitation of the elder master. It is rather to the first Italian journey, undertaken in 1630 (partly at the instigation of Rubens), and to the close study of Titian and Tintoretto at Venice that the pronounced change and further development in the style of the painter must be attributed, in so far as it is not to be accounted for by his natural self-development in the direction of that "*verdad no pintura*" ("truth, not painting") which was his device in art, and the principle towards the more complete realization of which his endeavors constantly tended. . . .

It is hardly surprising to learn, on the authority of Palomino, that "he was much pleased with the paintings of Titian, Tintoretto, Paolo, and other artists of that school; therefore he drew incessantly the whole time he was in Venice, and especially made studies from Tintoretto's famous 'Crucifixion,' and made a copy of the 'Communion of the Apostles,' which he presented to the king."

Velasquez entered Rome for the first time in the year 1630, and obtained a residence in the Vatican, which, however, he soon renounced in favor of the Villa Medici. Of this enchanting site he has left two characteristic landscape studies, now in the Prado, Madrid.

For the next eighteen years after his return from Italy, Velasquez remained uninterruptedly in the king's service, and his happy life of successful production, carried on under the vivifying rays of a court favor, which was undimmed in his particular branch by rivalry, is eventful only from the artistic, and not from the purely personal point of view. It was during this period that he acquired, in addition to his appointment of court painter, several offices—practically sinecures—the functions of which were connected with the service of their majesties and the court ceremonies. . . .

Olivares, always on the watch to exorcise the brooding melancholy to which Philip, after the fashion of his royal house, now already gave way, hit upon the expedient of conjuring up on the outskirts of the Prado a royal villa and grounds, to which the name of "Buen Retiro" was given. To adorn the walls of the new-made palace twelve military paintings of the largest dimensions were ordered for the "Sala del Reino," to illustrate the achievements which had marked the reign of Philip. These were executed by seven painters under the personal supervision of Velasquez, who, being but imperfectly satisfied with José Leonardo's version of the "Surrender of Breda," himself undertook to repeat this subject at a later period.

In November, 1648, nearly twenty years after his first visit to Rome, Velasquez

again left Madrid for Italy. The ostensible motive for this second Italian journey was to make arrangements, in his capacity of director of the works then in progress at the Alcazar, for the pictorial embellishment of the new apartments, and the acquisition of fresh art treasures for their adornment. On his return to Madrid, he petitioned for and obtained the highly remunerative but onerous office of *Aposentador de Palacio*, or palace marshal to the king, and in this capacity was charged with all the complicated arrangements necessitated by the royal journey to the Pyrenees, undertaken on April 15, 1660, on the occasion of the betrothal of the Infanta Maria Theresa to the youthful Louis XIV. of France. Yet it may not be doubted that this herculean task was to him a labor of love — so saturated was he with the Spanish court traditions, and with such unaffected seriousness did he take the administrative as well as the artistic side of his life. His duties were by no means ended when the royal caravan had, after nearly a month's journey, reached San Sebastian, the place chosen for the meeting of the French and Spanish courts; for here it became his office to inspect the ephemeral palace erected on the Island of Pheasants as a Conference House for the joint accommodation of the two sovereigns, and to superintend its decoration throughout with the finest Flemish tapestries, a selection of which had been expressly brought for the purpose from the Alcazar of Madrid.

Palomino speaks in glowing terms of the courtly refinement of Velasquez, who as a court official was present at all the stately functions and festivities which ensued. His costume on those occasions was of great elaboration, and displayed an exquisite taste and elegance. Amid numerous costly diamonds and gems he proudly displayed the recently acquired Order of Santiago, the red cross of which was embroidered also, in accordance with custom, on the cloak of the wearer.

On June 26 the master was back in Madrid, greeted with as much astonishment as joy by his wife, family, and friends; for a report of his death, which was but a presage of the end, then close at hand, had already reached the capital. On the last day of July, after having been all day in immediate attendance on his majesty, he was attacked by a subtle tertain fever, to which, after much suffering, he succumbed on August 6, in the year 1660. He had, at the command of the king, been attended in his last moments by no less a personage than the Archbishop of Tyre and Patriarch of both Indies, and his remains were honored with solemn and soberly splendid obsequies, such as befitted his high position at court and his recent inclusion in the knightly Order of Santiago.

The Art of Velasquez

RICHARD FORD "THE PENNY CYCLOPÆDIA"

IT is impossible to estimate Velasquez without going to Madrid. On seeing him in this, the richest gallery in the whole world, the first impression of his masculine power and universality of talent is irresistible. It is the reality more than the imitation of life and nature, and in every varied form.

His portraits baffle description and praise; they must be seen. He elevated that branch to the dignity of history. He drew the minds of men. They live, breathe, and seem ready to walk out of the frames. His power of painting circumambient air, his knowledge of lineal and aërial perspective, the gradations of tones in light, shadow, and color, give an absolute concavity to the flat surface of his canvas. We look into space, into a room, into the reflection of a mirror. . . .

After a few days spent in the gallery of Madrid, we fancy that we have actually been acquainted with the royal family and court of that day, and that we have lived with them. None perhaps but a Spaniard could so truly paint the Castilian. Velasquez was the Van Dyck of Madrid. He caught the high-bred look of the *hidalgo*, his grave demeanor and severe costume, with an excellence equal to his Flemish rival, differing only in degree. He was less fortunate in models. Van Dyck, like Zeuxis, had the selection of the most beauteous forms, faces, and apparel in the English court of Charles I. He seemed created expressly to delineate, with his clear, silvery, and transparent tones, his elegant aristocratic air, those delicate skins, and tapering fingers which are never seen in coarse, tawny Spain; but Velasquez never condescended to flatter even royalty. Honesty was his policy. Courts could not make a courtier of his practical genius, which saw everything as it really was; and his hand, that obeyed his intellect, gave the exact form and pressure. He rarely refined. He did not stoop to conciliate and woo his spectator. Thus, even when displeased with repulsive subjects, we submit to the power of a master-mind displayed in the representation. . . .

Velasquez was inferior to Van Dyck in representing female beauty, for he had not Van Dyck's advantages. The Oriental jealousy of the Spaniard revolted at any female portraiture, and still more at any display of beauteous form. The royal ladies, almost the only exception, were unworthy models, while the use of rouge disfigured their faces, and the enormous petticoats masked their proportions. Velasquez was emphatically a man, and the painter of men.

He was, moreover, a painter only of the visible, tangible beings on earth, not the mystical, glorified spirits of heaven. He could not conceive the inconceivable, nor define the indefinite. He required to touch before he could believe—a fulcrum for his mighty lever. He could not escape from humanity, nor soar above the clouds; he was somewhat deficient in "creative power;" he was neither a poet nor an enthusiast. Nature was his guide, truth his delight, man his model. No Virgin ever descended into his studio; no cherubs hovered around his palette. He did not work for priest or ecstatic anchorite, but for plumed kings and booted knights. . . .

In things mortal and touching man Velasquez was more than mortal. He is perfect throughout, whether painting high or low, rich or poor, young or old, human, animal, or natural objects. His dogs are equal to Snyder's; his chargers to Rubens—they know their rider. When Velasquez descended from heroes, his beggars and urchins rivalled Murillo. No Teniers or Hogarth ever came up to the waggish wassail of his drunkards. He is by far the first landscape painter of Spain; his scenes are full of local color, freshness, and daylight, whether verdurous, court-like avenues or wild, rocky solitudes. His historical pictures are pearls of great price; never were knights and soldiers so painted as in his "Surrender of Breda."

His drawing was admirable, correct and unconstrained; his mastery over his materials unequalled; his coloring was clear and clean; he seldom used mixed tints; he painted with long brushes, and often as coarsely as floor-cloth; but the effects, when seen from the intended distance, were magical, everything coming out into its proper place, form and tone. Yet no man was ever more sparing of color. He husbanded his whites and even his yellows, which tell, sparkling like gold, on his undertoned backgrounds. These, especially in his landscapes, were cool greys, skies, and misty mornings—nature seen with the intervention of air. He painted with a rapid, flowing and certain brush, with that ease, the test of perfection, that absence of art and effort, which made all imagine that they could do the same—until they tried, failed, and despaired. The results obtained are so true to nature that first beholders, as with Raphael at the Vatican, are sometimes disappointed that there is nothing more. He was above all tricks.

There is no masking poverty of hand or mind under meretricious glitter; all is sober, real, and sterling. He conceived his idea, worked it rapidly out, taking advantage of everything as it turned up, correcting and improving as he went on, knowing what he wanted, and — which few do — when he had got it. Then he left off, and never frittered away his breadth or emphatic effect by superfluous finish to mere accessories. These were dashed in *con quattro botti* — but true, for he never put brush to canvas without an intention and meaning. No painter was ever more *objective*. There is no showing off of the artist, no calling attention to the performer's dexterity. His mind was in his subject, into which he passed his whole soul, loving art for itself, without one disturbing thought of self. He was true throughout to Nature, and she was true to him, and has rewarded him with immortality, which she confers only on those who worship with undivided allegiance at her shrine.

R. A. M. STEVENSON "THE ART OF VELASQUEZ"

WHEN one speaks of Velasquez, it must be remembered that his influence upon art is still young. His genius slumbered for two hundred years, till the sympathy of one or two great artists broke the spell and showed us the true enchanter of realism, shaping himself from a cloud of misapprehension. . . .

As yet few but painters enjoy Velasquez, or rightly estimate his true position in the history of art. Not much is known about him. Contempt, not to say oblivion, fell on the man who preconceived the spirit of our own day. Amongst notable prophets of the new and true — Rubens, Rembrandt, Claude — he was the newest, and certainly the truest, from our point of view; so new and so true, indeed, that two hundred years after he had shown the mystery of light as God made it, we still hear that Velasquez was a sordid soul who never saw beauty, a mere master of technique, wholly lacking in imagination. . . .

In his latest pictures Velasquez seems to owe as little as any man may to the example of earlier painters. But, indeed, from the beginning he was a realist, and one whose ideal of art was to use his own eyes. His early pictures cannot be attached surely to any school; they are of doubtful parentage; though, with some truth, one might affiliate them to Caravaggio and the Italian naturalists. From the first, he shows sensitiveness to form, and a taste for solid and direct painting. He quickly learned to model with surprising justness, but for a long time he continued to treat a head in a group as he would if he saw it alone. Only slowly he learned to take the impression of a whole scene as the true motif of a picture. In his early work he faithfully observed the relations between bits of his subject, but not always the relation of each bit to the whole. If we compare the realistic work of the young Velasquez with the pictures of the great Venetians, we shall find it lacking their comfortable unity of aspect. That aspect may have been more remote in its relation to nature, but it was certainly ampler and more decoratively beautiful. Up to the age of thirty, indeed, Velasquez seemed content to mature quietly his powers of execution, without seeking to alter his style, or to improve the quality of his realism. Had he died during his first visit to Rome, it might have been supposed, without absurdity, that he had said his last word, and that, young as he was, he had lived to see his art fully ripened. It would be difficult, indeed, to do anything finer, with piecemeal realism for an ideal, than the later works of this first period. . . .

The conversation and example of Rubens, the study of Italian galleries, as well as the practice of palatial decoration at Buen Retiro, gave a decorative character to the art of Velasquez in the second period. One tastes a flavor of Venetian art in the subject-pictures, and one remarks something bold, summary, and less intimate than usual, about

the portraiture of this time. During these twenty years, if ever, Velasquez relaxed his effort at naturalism,—not that he slackened his grip upon form, but that he seems to have accepted in Italy the necessity for professional picture-making. His colors became a shade more positive or less bathed in light, and his unity to some extent an adopted decorative convention.

Upon his return from the second voyage to Italy, as if he had satisfied himself that Venetian art could not wholly render his manner of seeing, and that, at any rate, he had pushed it, in the "Surrender of Breda," as far as it could go, he comes about once more, and seeks for dignity and unity in the report of his own eyes. In fact he adds the charm that we call impressionism to such work of the third period as "Innocent X.," done in Rome, "The Maids of Honor," "The Tapestry Weavers," "Æsop," "Mœnippus," the "Infanta Maria Theresa," "Philip IV." (National Gallery), and some of the Dwarfs and Imbeciles in the Prado. . . .

In his later art, Velasquez never painted a wide view as he would a narrow one, nor a simple subject as a complicated one. When he painted a wide angle of sight, he either concentrated himself on a point, or steeped his whole canvas equally in a soft envelope of light. Indeed, whatever he painted, he always painted the quality of his attention to the scene, and, in virtue of that principle, his best pictures never look spotty, and never tempt one to cut them up into gem-like bits. His *ensemble* is always equally easy to grasp, whether he paints great groups like "The Maids of Honor" and "The Tapestry Weavers," solitary full-lengths like "Mœnippus" and "Æsop," costume-portraits like "Maria Theresa," or simple busts like the head of Philip.

But if the art of all these pictures is based on the same principles, the technique is very different in them all. You may note a wonderful variety in Velasquez's style of modelling a head, not only in different periods of his life, but in pictures of the same period, and, what is more, in heads on the same canvas. Some heads are modelled very broadly and softly, without a sharp mark, a hard edge, or small, steep planes. The surfaces slide into each other in a loose, supple manner, that almost makes them look as if they were shaped in jelly or fluid. Some consist of bold, rough-hewn planes which give a face the force and vigor of firm chiselling. Others, again, are completed to show the finest niceties of shape and inclination, with an intimacy of feeling and a delicacy of proportion that no man has ever equalled. The handling is always discreet and inspired by the necessities of the occasion; neither does it follow a determined pattern, which might impart a frozen and artificial look, nor does it seek an effect of *bravura* dexterity which might arrogate an undue share of attention and interest. Although no certain rule can be laid down, generally speaking Velasquez inclines to brush in the obvious direction of the forms, so as to supplement tone and structure by the sentiment of the execution. In many cases, however, he smudges so subtly as to convey no sense of direct handling. The limb or object treated seems to grow mysteriously out of dusky depths and to be shaped by real light.

His impulse to arrange a canvas grew out of the scene before his eyes. His severe and stately color is founded on nature. His execution becomes quiet and exact, or burly and impetuous, as the occasion demands. More than any other man's, his work convinces us that he knew what he saw, and was incapable of self-deception; it is wholly free from haphazard passages, treacly approximations to tone, or clever tricks and processes that evade rather than resolve a difficulty. Above all, his art is interesting without the extravagance which may kindle a momentary excitement, but is apt to die of satiety from its very violence. The restrained force and dignity of Velasquez inspire one with reverence and lasting respect; one cannot easily fathom the depth of his insight nor weary of his endless variety.

LÉON BONNAT PREFACE TO "VELAZQUEZ," BY A. DE BERUETE

VELASQUEZ is a true master. If he has rivals, none is his superior. Not one among his contemporaries overshadows his glory. Compare him with the most illustrious, with Rembrandt for example—Rembrandt the mighty magician, who makes his people live in an atmosphere of his own invention, who creates an entire world in his powerful imagination, moulds it, gives it light and color, as he feels it to be, goes where his genius wills, and produces the wonderful masterpieces of which we never weary. There is nothing of this kind with Velasquez. What the Spanish master seeks above all is character and truth. He is a realist in the broadest and best acceptation of the word. He paints nature as he sees her and as she is. The air that he breathes is our own, his sky is that under which we live. His portraits impress us with the same feeling that we have when in the presence of living beings.

And he goes his own way, this great painter. In his lofty, perhaps unconscious, serenity he does not allow himself to be turned by any one from the path which he has marked out for himself, which his genius has revealed to him. Rubens, the illustrious Rubens, who arrived at Madrid with the prestige of an ambassador, with a halo of glory, universally renowned; Rubens, to whom Velasquez lent his studio, whom he conducted to the Escorial by order of the King, whom he saw paint an incredible number of masterpieces,—Rubens himself, notwithstanding his resplendent genius, notwithstanding his inexhaustible fertility of production, had no influence over Velasquez. The Spanish painter remained true to the tradition of his race. As he was before the coming of the Flemish master, even so he remained after his departure; and posterity, with all gratitude, bows before his powerful originality. FROM THE FRENCH.

E. R. PENNELL "VELASQUEZ IN MADRID," "THE NATION," VOL. 59

VELASQUEZ, according to popular misconception, was an uncompromising realist, a very Zola among painters; therefore the illogical conclusion is drawn that beauty of color and rhythm of line were without his scope, beyond his reach. But because—except when he was painting pure landscape—he emancipated himself from conventions outworn and dead, and expressed himself in terms entirely personal, it need not follow that he defied the essential conditions and restrictions of all art; because he presented a subject as no other man would, and recorded character as no other man could, it is not necessary to see in him but the submissive slave of nature. To a man of his temperament, unquestioning obedience to tradition was impossible; to a painter of his vision, truth was not to be disregarded; to an artist of his genius, nature could offer but "slovenly suggestions." . . .

That he could grasp the salient characteristics of the thing or person he painted as no one had done before, or has done since, his portraits establish beyond a doubt. The face of his Philip, with its strange pallor and full Austrian lips, is as familiar to us as that of an intimate friend; his Infantas and Admirals and Dwarfs, once seen, are never forgotten. Though Ribera's or Murillo's saints bear a strong family likeness, though among Titian's goddesses the one scarce differs from the next, Velasquez's men and women have each his, or her, own complexion and color, varying from the bloodless Philip to the swarthy Æsop. The same flesh tints, once mixed upon his palette, never served for all his heads, as the wonderful group in the foreground of the "Surrender of Breda" triumphantly testifies. But his innovations, more startling to his age than to ours, and his study of truth, which has gained for him the name of naturalist, did not leave him indifferent to the larger aspects, the more legitimate functions of art. It is the great glory of the Prado that it contains canvas after canvas to bear witness to the skill with which, from nature's vaguest hint, he could create a rare arrangement of color, a rare scheme of decoration.

So long as his sense of color betrays itself only in a bit of brown drapery, as in "The Topers," or in a crimson sash, as in the equestrian "Philip" and "Don Baltasar," there is nothing to bewilder. It is when he has filled his picture, not merely with spots of beautiful color, but vith an exquisite harmony, that the artless, to whom the folds of blue mantle over saintly shoulders or the sweep of red cloak in mythological landscape mean color, cry out and denounce him as no idealist. But, though they have not eyes to see it, half the charm of the "Surrender of Breda" is in the stirring symphony in green and blue which nature, unaided, could never have produced; half the strength of "Vulcan's Forge" in the subdued browns and gold vividly imagined, not actually seen; half the loveliness of "The Maids of Honor" in the tender greys and greens, carried with such matchless subtlety from the walls (which prepare the way for the serene neutral tints of the modern master-decorator) to the silken gowns stretched over hoops which he alone knew how to make beautiful in their stiff ugliness. As if to emphasize the meagreness of the means by which he obtained his effects, he has painted himself in this picture, holding in his hand his palette. Umbers and siennas, red and white and black, are the colors laid upon it. Again, so long as he seems content with a grandiose simplicity of arrangement, as in those royal portraits where a curtain, a chair, and a table of almost photographic primness are his sole resources, the unintelligent deplore his relentless realism, his disdain of all decorative conventions. And once having called him a realist, they refuse to recognize the grandeur of composition in the equestrian portraits, with their wide landscapes and sweeping and majestic lines that render useless the stale old device of people and houses in the middle distance to bring out the dignity and bigness of horse and rider. They refuse to see more than a bald record of facts in the impressive array of lances which break up the expanse of clouded sky and give their name to the picture of the "Surrender of Breda;" more than the result of chance in the treatment of tapestry and the three enchanting little figures in the background of "The Tapestry Weavers;" and of all the sixty-odd canvases in the Prado, it is invariably upon "The Maids of Honor" they hit as proof positive of the haphazard element in his method. But what if the grouping were, as is said, the outcome of Philip's desire to have the scene before him, as he sat for his portrait, transferred to canvas — the little Infanta Margarita, attended by her maids of honor, its centre, the painter himself at his easel a prominent feature? If he owed his subject to the caprice of a King, the painter's invention could still force materials so unpromising to yield a noble harmony of form as of color. The arrangement in "The Maids of Honor" is so perfect in its subtlety, so well-balanced in its parts, so tranquil and lovely as a whole, that, even if the color were less beautiful, the atmospheric effects less true, one could still understand why Luca Giordano thought to find in this picture "the theology of painting" — the *poetry* of painting would better have expressed his meaning. Before such masterpieces, wonder at the virile and personal presentment of truth in the work of Velasquez is forgotten for delight in its glory of color, its splendor of decoration; and these are qualities found in their full perfection only in the pictures of the Prado.

WALTER ARMSTRONG "THE ART OF VELASQUEZ," "PORTFOLIO," 1896

VELASQUEZ is the most objective of all great painters, and his art consists more exclusively than any one else's of interpretation carried to the highest point. As for his technique, it followed a simple course of evolution from the beginning to the end. His object from first to last was truth to his impressions. Like those of other people, these were bald at first, and their realization laborious. As time went on he saw more, and made the necessary distinctions with a more unerring ease. But he never ceased to be satisfied with seeing and putting down what he saw. His authentic works

are free from the slightest tendency to substitute cleverness for truth. He never "faked." His drawing scarcely deserves its reputation for correctness, indeed many of his pictures are curiously out in this respect; but it always strikes that note of sincerity which is better than precision.

His cardinal quality, however, was his extraordinary facility in seeing and reproducing every relation between tones. He threads his way through whole processions of values with so convinced a certainty that we ask for nothing more. We put the same faith in his statements as we do in those of Shakespeare. What Shakespeare does for the inner man Velasquez does for his form and envelope as he stands in the upper air. And he does it with the same gravity, the same sanity, the same utter absence of pose or self-assertion. The idea never enters his head that his own individual trick with the brush could have an interest for any human being. He paints now *staccato*, now with a smeary drag, just as the task before him suggests. He never steps forward and makes his own personality the centre of his own performance. His aim was the dignified interpretation of nature,—of nature arranged and brought into agreeable juxtapositions, no doubt, but not of nature bedizened, or cajoled, or forced; and in making for it he took the surest and most simple, if not always the shortest route. His imagination had reserves into which we get a hasty glance now and then, but either through intellectual indolence, or a deliberate conviction in favor of restricting paint to the interpretation of what the painter can set up in front of him, his creative fancy was very seldom allowed to substitute itself for the results of memory and observation. . . .

No great painter has left less of himself outside his work than Velasquez; and yet of all those who have built up the commanding fabric of modern art, he seems by far the nearest to ourselves.

KENYON COX "THE NATION," VOL. 49

VELASQUEZ had an idealizing power of his own, but it lay in his intense perception of truth and beauty of light. Here he was the innovator and the unapproachable master. He was the first to see and to paint light and air, the first painter of aspects, the great and true *impressionist*. In his greatest works, "The Maids of Honor" and "The Tapestry Weavers," the figures seem merely incidents, while the true subject is the light that plays upon them, and the air in front of them and around them; and by the delicate ordonnance and balancing of these elements he produces a composition as truly ideal as the grand arrangements of line or splendid harmonies of color of the Florentines or Venetians. With the Dutchmen and with Velasquez modern painting begins, but Velasquez is more essentially modern than the Dutchmen. The powerful chiaroscuro of Rembrandt would have seemed exaggerated to him, and Terburg's detailed insistence upon tangible fact would have seemed petty. He was the great discoverer of *values;* and to him the just amount of light upon an object and the exact quantity of air between it and the spectator—its *appearance* at a given distance and under a given effect—this was the one thing about it worth painting, and this he painted as perhaps no man has done since.

PAUL LEFORT "VELAZQUEZ"

VELASQUEZ may be regarded as a precursor, an initiator, of the modern school of painting. In his manner of interpreting life, in his just observation of the laws of light, in his habitually clear and simple method of representation, as well as in his technique,—so novel and so original even nowadays,—Velasquez marks such an advance upon the art of his time that he seems rather to belong to our own. The striking relief and perfect solidity with which he endows natural objects, the marvellous envel-

opment of air with which he surrounds them, gives such a peculiar intensity of illusion and appearance of life to his work, that, comparing it with the productions of even our boldest realists, we are tempted to exclaim that this painter of Philip IV. speaks not only the language of the painter of to-day, but that of the painter of the future,— a language so completely formulated, so definite and so perfected by this master of two centuries ago, that we may say, and without injustice, that even our impressionists— the advance guard of the modern school— have as yet scarce learned to lisp it.— FROM THE FRENCH.

The Spanish School of Painting

1446 TO 1874

THE early art of Spain, unlike that of Italy, is marked by no clear and gradual dawn, and what may have been its beginnings is largely a matter of conjecture. The struggles of the country for political existence, as well as the frequent contests with the Moors, tended to retard its artistic development; and little is to be found which antedates the fourteenth century. Even the paintings of that and of the following century are for the most part but feeble imitations of the works of Italian and Flemish masters. In method and technique, indeed, the Spanish school was more derivative than original, being strongly influenced by both Italy and the Netherlands; but in spirit it was, from the beginning, peculiarly Spanish, reflecting in the sombre tone of coloring which prevails, and in the absence of that poetical imagination which charms us in the examples of early Italian art, the national characteristics of the race.

The powerful influence of the Church, the narrow bigotry of the people and their rulers, and the terrors of the Inquisition, have all left their impress. Classic art was unknown, study of the nude was forbidden, and with the early painters, many of whom were fervent to fanaticism, it was the religious subject which prevailed, not, however, so mildly devout and pietistic in expression as passionate, emotional and often morose, ghastly, and horrible.

With the accession to the throne of Charles V. in 1516, and the advance in political importance of the kingdom, Spanish painting received a decided impetus. Italy and the Netherlands were opened to his subjects, and not only did it become customary for Spanish artists to go to Rome, Florence, and Venice to study under the great Italian masters, but painters from Italy and Flanders, attracted by reports of royal favor and munificence, frequently visited the Spanish court.

The influence of Flanders, however, which in the fifteenth century had been the predominating one, was now, in the sixteenth, superseded by that of Italy. The drawing of the Florentine masters, the color of the Venetians, and the light and shade of the Neapolitans became standards, and it was under the Italian artists settled in Spain and the Spaniards who had studied in Italy that the school which is known as "Spanish" may be said to have come into being.

It was not until towards the middle of the seventeenth century that Spanish painting began to be represented in a national manner, and methods founded on nature prevailed. This was the period when painting in Spain attained its highest development, — the period when the two most illustrious artists flourished,— Bartolome Esteban Murillo, the greatest religious painter of Spain, and always one of the most popular, not only in his own but in other countries, and Diego Rodriguez de Silva Velasquez, who stands pre-eminently first in the history of Spanish painting.

One of the few who were able to free themselves from the yoke of the Church,

Velasquez is, in the broadest meaning of the word, a realist. He is the greatest and most original painter that Spain has produced. But, although acknowledged even by his contemporaries to be the first among Spanish painters, and without a rival as he was in the favor of the King and court, Velasquez had nevertheless but few immediate scholars. His son-in-law, Juan Battista del Mazo, his slave and afterwards freedman, Juan de Pareja, and his successor in court favor, Carreño de Miranda, are all that achieved distinction.

The golden period of Spanish painting came to an end before the close of the seventeenth century, and for more than a hundred years no artist of eminence appeared. Not until the advent of Francisco Goya (1746–1828), a painter of ability and originality, was the decline of Spanish art even temporarily checked.

It may with truth be said that among the painters of to-day — the modern French painters and their fellow artists in Europe and in this country — are found the real followers and scholars of the great Spanish master, Velasquez.

MEMBERS OF THE SPANISH SCHOOL

ANTONIO DEL RINCON, 1446–1500 — Alonso Beruguete, 1480–1561 — Luis de Vargas, 1502–68 — Juan de Juanes (Vicente Joanes), 1506–79 — Luis de Morales, about 1510–86 — Alonso Sanchez Coello, about 1512–90 — Gasper Becerra, 1520–70 — Juan Fernandez Navarette, called "El Mudo," 1526–79 — Francisco de Ribalta, about 1550–1628 — Juan de las Roelas, 1558–1625 — Francisco Pacheco, 1571–1654 — Francisco de Herrera the elder, born 1576, and his son known as Francisco "El Mozo" — Eugenio Caxes, 1577–1642 — Josef de Ribera, called "Lo Spagnoletto," 1588–1656 — Juan de Ribalta, 1597–1628 — Francisco Zurbaran, 1598–1662 — Diego Rodriguez de Silva Velasquez, 1599–1660 — Francisco Collantes, 1599–1656 — Espinosa, 1600–80 — Alonso Cano, 1601–67 — Juan Carreño de Miranda, 1614–85 — Bartolome Esteban Murillo, 1618–82 — Juan de Valdes, 1630–91 — Claudio Coello, 1635–93 — Francisco Goya, 1746–1828 — Mariano Fortuny, 1838–74.

The Works of Velasquez

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

"DON FERDINAND OF AUSTRIA" THE PRADO: MADRID

THIS picture is the only known portrait by Velasquez of Don Ferdinand, youngest brother of Philip IV. It was painted probably about 1628, when the prince was nineteen years old, but shows traces of retouching by the master at a later period.

Ferdinand was an enthusiastic sportsman, and is here represented in hunting-costume, standing with his dog under an oak-tree. The landscape, showing a Sierra in the distance, is in a cool light blue-grey tone, and is treated with breadth and freedom.

"THE TOPERS" THE PRADO: MADRID

"THE Topers" ("Los Borrachos") was painted by Velasquez for the King in 1628 or '29, just before the artist's first visit to Italy, and is one of the finest examples of his early manner. The scene is a bacchanalian revel, in which the youthful wine-god, crowned with leaves and enthroned on a cask, is surrounded by his votaries. The brightest light is centred on his figure, the white flesh tints contrasting strongly with the swarthy heads of the group of Spanish peasants.

"Whoever would form an opinion of the artist's treatment of the nude," writes Professor Justi, "should study this youthful, soft, yet robust figure of Bacchus. The

outstretched arm, the projecting knee, the lower leg with the light of the red mantle reflected upon it, all show that Velasquez had scarcely anything more to learn in this direction." "No brush," says Gautier, "has modelled flesh more finely, has painted it with more *souplesse*, or made it seem so living."

"JUANA DE MIRANDA" BERLIN GALLERY

THE Berlin Gallery has lately acquired this portrait by Velasquez, believed to be that of his wife, Juana de Miranda. This name is inscribed on the back of the canvas in an old style of writing.

The lady wears a flowered black velvet gown over which hangs a long, heavy, gold chain. A diamond ornament is in her auburn hair, which towers high above her forehead. Her eyes are brown and deep-set, her cheeks faintly tinged with red — a genuinely Spanish face. "She has the easy attitude of refined culture," writes Justi, "although the proud bearing, the firm grasp of the red chair, and the expression seem to betray more character than is seen in the royal ladies. Assuredly no one can look at this portrait without a feeling of regret that Velasquez should have been prevented by the prejudice of his country from leaving us more specimens of his skill in this branch of portraiture."

"DON BALTASAR CARLOS ON HORSEBACK" THE PRADO: MADRID

THE Infante Don Baltasar Carlos, son of Philip IV. and his first wife, Isabella of Bourbon, was born on October 17, 1629, and died when he was seventeen years old. Velasquez painted the young prince many times. The portrait in the Prado, Madrid, here reproduced, was taken when the boy was in his seventh year.

"Never in his whole career," writes Walter Armstrong, "did Velasquez equal this picture in spontaneous vitality or in splendor of color. Intellectually the motive is absolutely simple. The boy gallops past at an angle which brings him into the happiest proportion with his mount. His attitude is the natural one for a pupil of Philip and Olivares, two of the best horsemen in Europe; his look and gesture express just the degree of pride, delight and desire for approval which charm in a child. Through all this Velasquez has worked for simplicity. He has been governed by the sincere desire to paint the boy as he was, with no parade or affectation. That done, he has turned his attention to the æsthetic effect. The mane and tail of the Andalusian pony, the boy's rich costume and his flying scarf, and the splendid browns, blues, and greens of the landscape background make up a decorative whole, as rich and musical as any Titian."

"POPE INNOCENT X." DORIA GALLERY: ROME

"THE second sojourn of Velasquez in Rome," writes Walter Armstrong, "is illumined in his artistic career by the production of one of his most extraordinary pictures. Innocent X. decided to honor the Spaniard by sitting for his portrait. The Pope was at this time seventy-four years of age, but contemporaries describe him as having preserved in an unusual degree that air of commanding vigor suggested by the master. The seated figure is turned slightly to the left, and the strong sinister face confronts the spectator with a look in which cunning, secretiveness, and a touch of sensuality are combined. The reds of the cap, the robe, and the chair, and the Pope's own ruddy flesh-tones, are reinforced by the crimson of the curtain behind him."

We are told that when the Pope sent his chamberlain to pay the painter, Velasquez refused to accept the money, saying that the King, his master, always paid him with his own hand. The Pope, it is said, humored him.

"THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS" THE PRADO: MADRID

"THE Tapestry Weavers" ("Las Hilanderas") was painted probably in 1656. It represents a room in the royal tapestry works of Madrid, where, in the mysterious half-light of the foreground, an elderly woman and four young girls are spinning, winding, and carding wool. In a raised alcove, brightly illumined by a broad beam of sunshine, some visitors are inspecting a piece of tapestry.

J. F. White in writing of this picture says: "The subject is nothing, the treatment everything. It is full of light, air, and movement, splendid in color, and marvellous in handling. We see in it the full ripeness of the power of Velasquez, a concentration of all the art-knowledge he had gathered during his long artistic career of more than forty years. In no picture is he greater as a colorist. The scheme is simple,—a harmony of red, bluish-green, grey, and black, which are varied and blended with consummate skill."

"Velasquez," says Pedro de Madrazo, in describing this work, "is not only a painter, he is a magician."

"THE MAIDS OF HONOR" THE PRADO: MADRID

"THE Maids of Honor" ("Las Meninas"), painted in 1656, belongs to the period of the highest development of Velasquez's genius. The scene is in the painter's studio in the Old Palace, or Alcazar, of Madrid.

"It is generally said," writes R. A. M. Stevenson, "that Velasquez was painting the king, who sat in the spot from which the spectator is supposed to see the picture of 'Las Meninas.' During a moment's rest the Infanta Margarita came in with her attendants, and the king was struck with the group which fell together before his eyes. Near him he saw the princess, her maids, her dog, and her dwarfs; a little farther on the left, Velasquez, who had stepped back to look at his picture; farther still on the right, a duenna and courtier talking; while at the distant end of the gallery the king saw his queen and himself reflected in a mirror, and, through the open door, Don José Nieto drawing back a curtain. The canvas shown in the picture would naturally be the one on which Velasquez was painting the king's portrait. Some, however, will have it to be the very canvas of 'Las Meninas,' which Velasquez was painting from a reflection in a mirror placed near to where the king had been sitting. It is not a matter of importance, and the story of the conception of the picture may easily have got mixed in the telling. It is just possible that Velasquez was painting, or was about to paint, a portrait of the Infanta only, when the idea of the large picture suddenly occurred to him or to the king. Tradition says that the red cross of the Order of Santiago, which you can see on the painter's breast, was painted there by the king's own hand, as a promise of the honor that was to be conferred on him afterwards."

This picture, one of the most perfect facsimiles of nature ever produced by art, was pronounced by Luca Giordano to be "the theology of painting." "So complete is the illusion," writes Gautier, "that standing in front of 'Las Meninas' one is tempted to ask, 'Where then is the picture?'"

"SURRENDER OF BREDA" THE PRADO: MADRID

"BETWEEN 1645 and 1648," writes Sir William Maxwell-Stirling, "Velasquez painted his noble 'Surrender of Breda,' a picture executed with peculiar care, perhaps out of regard for the memory of his illustrious friend the Marquis of Spinola, who died a victim to the ingratitude of the Spanish court. It represents that great general—the last Spain ever had—in one of the proudest moments of his career, re-

ceiving, in 1625, the keys of the city of Breda from Prince Justin of Nassau, who conducted the obstinate defence. The victor, clad in mail, and remarkable for easy dignity of mien, meets his vanquished foe hat in hand, and prepares to embrace him with generous cordiality. Behind the leaders stand their horses and attendants, and beyond the staff of Spinola there is a line of pikemen, whose pikes, striping the blue sky, have caused the picture to be known as that of 'The Lances.'"

This masterpiece of Velasquez's middle life, and one of the finest historical pictures in the world, was painted for the palace of Buen Retiro, and now hangs in the Prado, Madrid. The appearance of immensity which is given by the canvas has often been remarked, and although no more than twenty figures are in sight, we have the impression of the presence of an army.

"PHILIP IV." NATIONAL GALLERY: LONDON

THIS portrait of Philip IV. of Spain was painted when the King was about fifty years of age. He is here represented in black, with the chain of the order of the Golden Fleece around his neck, and wearing the *golilla*, or stiff, projecting collar which he had himself invented, and of which Madame D'Aulnoy tells us ("Voyage d'Espagne") he was so proud that he celebrated the invention by a festival, followed by a procession to church to give thanks to God for the blessing.

"Faithful in few things," writes J. F. White, "Philip kept true to Velasquez, whom he visited daily in his studio in the palace, and to whom he stood in many attitudes and costumes,—as a huntsman with his dog, as a warrior in command of his troops, and even on his knees at prayer, wearing ever the same dull, uninterested look. His pale face and lack-lustre eye, his fair flowing hair and moustaches curled up to his eyes, and his heavy, projecting Austrian lip, are known in many a portrait, and nowhere more supremely than in this wonderful canvas, where he seems to live and breathe. Few portraits in the whole range of art will compare with this work, in which the consummate handling of Velasquez is seen at its best, for it is in his late, and most perfect manner."

"THE INFANTA MARIA THERESA" THE PRADO: MADRID

THIS picture, entitled "Maria Theresa," is believed by Professor Justi and other authorities to be a portrait of her step-sister, Margarita, the little princess of "The Maids of Honor." R. A. M. Stevenson writes: "She stands directly facing the light, in a wonderfully elaborate balloon dress, embroidered with a complicated pattern of silver and pink and gleaming jewelry. In one hand she holds a rose, in the other a lace handkerchief, and on the left behind her, in the shadow, a red curtain droops in heavy folds. No pupil touched the smallest accessory of this extraordinary costume; lace, ruffles, embroidery, every inch of the dress is painted by Velasquez, with a running slippery touch which appears careless near at hand, but which at the focus gives color, pattern, sparkle, and underlying form with the utmost precision and completeness. The shadow behind the figure is aërial in quality, deep but not heavy, and silvered like the passages in light, so that black would tell upon it as a rude brutality of tone."

VELASQUEZ'S PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS, WITH THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS

BERLIN GALLERY: The Infanta Maria, Sister of Philip IV.; Portrait of Juana de Miranda (Plate III); Court Dwarf; Alessandro del Borro — DRESDEN, ROYAL GALLERY: Portrait of Olivares; Two Male Portraits — DULWICH GALLERY: Philip IV. — FRANKFORT, STÄDEL INSTITUTE: Cardinal Borgia — FLORENCE, PITTI PALACE: Philip IV.; Portrait of

a Man — Florence, Uffizi Gallery: Philip IV. on Horseback; Two Portraits of Velasquez — The Hague, Museum: The Infante Don Baltasar Carlos; Landscape — Kingston Lacy, England, Bankes Collection: "Tapestry Weavers" Sketch; Cardinal Borgia — London, National Gallery: Philip IV. (Plate IX); Philip IV.; The Boar-Hunt; Christ at the Column; Adoration of the Shepherds; Christ in the House of Martha; Admiral Pulido Pareja — London, Apsley House: Water-Carrier; Two Boys; Portrait of a Man; Pope Innocent X.; Don Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas — London, Dudley House: St. Clara; Portrait of a Man — London, Hertford House: Philip IV.; Three Portraits of Don Baltasar Carlos; Lady with a Fan; Portrait of Olivares; Portrait of an Infanta; Landscape — London, Grosvenor House: The Riding-School; Portrait of Young Man — London, Richmond Hill: Two Peasants, Kitchen Scene; Spanish Beggar — London, Stafford House: St. Charles Borromeo; St. Francis Borgia; Landscape — Madrid, The Escorial: Joseph's Coat — Madrid, The Prado: Adoration of the Magi; Christ Crucified; Coronation of the Virgin; St. Anthony Abbot and St. Paul, the Hermit; The Topers ("Los Borrachos") (Plate II); The Forge of Vulcan; Surrender of Breda ("Las Lanzas") (Plate VIII); Mercury and Argus; Philip III. on Horseback; Margarita of Austria, Wife of Philip III., on Horseback; Philip IV. on Horseback; Isabella of Bourbon, First Wife of Philip IV., on Horseback; Don Baltasar Carlos on Horseback (Plate IV); The Count-Duke Olivares on Horseback; Philip IV. Standing; Philip IV. in Armor; Maria, Queen of Hungary, Sister of Philip IV.; Don Carlos, Brother of Philip IV.; Don Ferdinand, Brother of Philip IV. (Plate I); Philip IV. in Hunting-Costume; Don Baltasar Carlos in Hunting-Costume; Philip IV. with Sceptre; Two Portraits of Mariana of Austria, Second Wife of Philip IV.; Philip IV.; Philip IV. at Prayer; Mariana of Austria at Prayer; Don Baltasar Carlos; Infanta Maria Theresa, Daughter of Philip IV. (Plate X); The Tapestry Weavers ("Las Hilanderas") (Plate VI); Don Luis de Gongora y Argote; Juana de Miranda, Wife of Velasquez; Francisca, Daughter of Velasquez; The Sculptor Martinez Montañes; The Maids of Honor ("Las Meninas") (Plate VII); Don Antonio Alonso Pimentel; Æsop; Mœnippus; Mars; Two Male Portraits; Alfonso Martinez de Espinar; Pablillos de Valladolid, a Buffoon; "El Primo," a Dwarf; "El Bobo de Coria;" "El Niño de Vallecas;" "Don Antonio el Ingles," a Dwarf; Don Sebastian de Morro, a Dwarf; Don Juan de Austria, a Buffoon; Babarroja, a Buffoon; Ten Landscapes — Munich Gallery: Portrait of Olivares — Paris, Louvre: The Infanta Margarita Maria; Two Portraits of Philip IV.; The Infanta Maria Theresa; "Réunion de Portraits;" Don Pedro de Altamira — Rokeby Park, England: Venus with the Mirror — Rome, Doria Gallery: Pope Innocent X. (Plate V) — Rome, Capitoline Gallery: Portrait of Velasquez (Page 20) — Salisbury, Longford Castle: Don Adrian Pulido Pareja; Juan de Pareja — Stockholm Museum: Philip IV. — St. Petersburg, Hermitage Gallery: Pope Innocent X. — Vienna, Imperial Gallery: Mariana of Austria, Second Wife of Philip IV.; Two Portraits of Philip IV.; Three Portraits of the Infanta Margarita Maria; The Infante Philip Prosper; Don Baltasar Carlos; The Infanta Maria Theresa; Isabella of Bourbon, First Wife of Philip IV.; Laughing Boy — York, England, Castle Howard: Juan de Pareja; Don Baltasar Carlos and His Dwarf.

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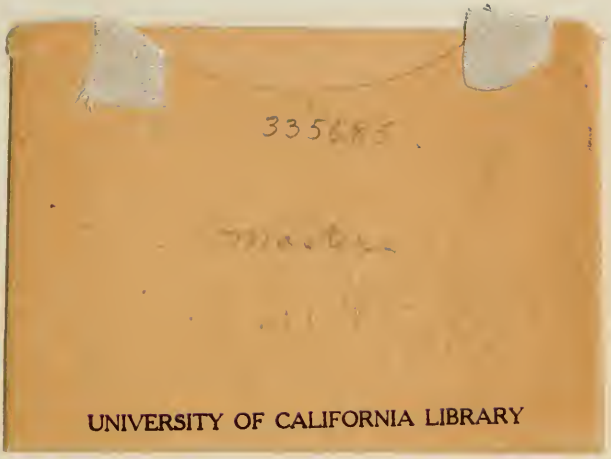
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